



Avon Health Center

March 1, 2023

Written testimony of Amy Pellerin, Administrator of Avon Health Center, Concerning Skilled Nursing Facility Funding For SFY 2024 and SFY 2025

Members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Amy Pellerin I am the Administrator of Avon Health Center in Avon, Connecticut. Avon Health Center has been providing nursing home care in our community for over 50 years. We are a 120 bed Skilled Nursing Facility, and we have 137 employees working at our facility, and we are members of the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities (CAHCF).

A Period of Trauma *and* Resilience for our Nursing Home Residents and Caregivers

Now three years into this unrelenting COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency and I can say that our nursing home, the residents we serve, and our employees, continue to be challenged like no other time in our history of providing services in Connecticut. I can *also* say that our nursing home is as determined as ever, and we feel that each week we are getting closer to a time when we can say the pandemic is behind us.

Ravaging Inflation, Severe Staffing Shortages is Hindering Admissions, Increasing Labor Costs and Slowing the Nursing Home Recovery

Never before experienced inflation and the ongoing staffing crisis are the top issues that are not addressed in the budget recommendation.

Inflation. We are losing ground everyday! Here are the examples of what is happening rising food costs, skyrocketing utility and fuel costs to heat and cool our buildings, medical supply costs that are extremely hard to keep up with. Supply chain issues continue to plague our industry for basics, forcing us to purchase more expensive items or go without. When we can get supplies, we are paying double for food items, supplements and medical supplies to take care of those we are entrusted to care for. The proposed funding for nursing homes doesn't recognize what is happening with inflation, and we are asking you to recognize the real inflation that we are experiencing in the budget.

Staffing Crisis. The severe staffing shortages our nursing home have faced during the pandemic is not letting up. Here is what is happening. We are unable to routinely being unable to take hospital admissions. Impacting our business growth. We are paying overtime, shift differentials thus burning out the loyal and dedicated staff we are so fortunate to have with us on our challenging journey, we are forced to increase the use of nursing pools, which in turn impacts quality, care and our ability to provide raises to our own staff. Staff retention is as important as recruitment and keeping our good staff in place is becoming harder and harder. Our skilled nursing facility needs more resources to boost the pay of our extraordinary employees, but the proposed budget doesn't address this issue.

The resources the state legislature previously provided us to increase staff pay has made all the difference over the last two years, our employees are losing ground against inflation, just as we are. We need more funding More funding is needed in the budget to address the unbelievable inflation we are facing and to help us with our soaring labor costs.

Thank you.